DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 141 797 CS 003 595

AUTHOR Campbell, Richard W.
TITLE Using Comic Books as an Alternative Supplement to the Basal Reading Program at Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School.
PUB DATE Jan 77
NOTE 49p.; Midi Practicum for D.Ed., Nova University

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Comics (Publications); Grade 4; Intermediate Grades; Practicums; Program Evaluation; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Research; *Teaching Techniques; *Vocabulary Development

ABSTRACT

This practicum sought to improve reading vocabulary and comprehension in fourth-grade students by using comic books 30 minutes per day as a supplement to the regular basal reading program. High-interest comic books were used by a class section of 18 students in the experimental group, for a period of four months. Another class section of 20 students was selected as a control group. Instructional units and lesson plans using comic books were developed to teach specifically identified reading skills. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test was used as a measure both before and after the program. Although not significant, differences in gains in vocabulary and comprehension favored the experimental group. (Author/AA)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

JAN 31 1977

ED141797

USING COMIC BOOKS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SUPPLEMENT TO THE BASAL READING PROGRAM AT ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Richard W. Campbell
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

By Richard W. Campbell[1]

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, Nova University

Dallas II
Dr. William Webster

Midi Practicum
January 23, 1977

CS 003 595

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	(i)
INTRODUCTION	(ii)
THE PROBLEM	1
A SOLUTION	7
General Plan	7
Selection of Participants - Students	8
Selection of Participants - Teachers	8
Role of Reading Resource Teacher	9
Selection of Testing	9
Selection of Comics	10
Selection of Teaching Method	11
IMPLEMENTING THE PRACTICUM	11
Planning	11
Conferences Between Principal and Teachers	13
Role of Principal	14
LIMITATIONS AND SOLUTIONS	15
Random Selection	15
Contamination and Hawthorne Effect	16

PAGE

The Use of Two Teachers..... 16

Limited Number of Students..... 17

EVALUATION..... 17

Experimental Group - Vocabulary..... 17

Experimental Group - Comprehension..... 19

Control Group - Vocabulary and Comprehension..... 21

Summary Statistics - Grade Equivalent Scores..... 21

Summary Results - Analysis of Covariance..... 24

Summary Results - Absolute F..... 27

Experimental Teacher's Statement..... 28

Reading Resource Teacher's Statement..... 29

Evaluation Conclusions..... 30

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 31

FURTHER APPLICATION AND FOLLOW-UP..... 31

APPENDICES..... 34

Appendix A..... 34

Appendix B..... 36

PAGE

Appendix C..... 37

FOOTNOTES..... 38

LIST OF CHARTS

PAGE

Chart 1
Reading According to the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Grade 4, Fall, 1974, F. Roosevelt Attendance Area..... 3

LIST OF TABLES

PAGE

Table 1
Pre- and Posttests on Reading Vocabulary and Comprehension Measured by Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Experimental Group 18

Table 2
Pre- and Posttest on Reading Vocabulary and Comprehension Measured by Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test - Control Group..... 20

Table 3
Summary Statistics Gates-MacGinitie Grade Equivalent Scores Comprehension..... 22

Table 4
Summary Statistics Gates-MacGinitie Grade Equivalent Scores - Vocabulary..... 23

Table 5
Analysis of Covariance Summary Results Gates-MacGinitie Grade Equivalent on Vocabulary..... 26

Table 7
Summary of Absolute F..... 27

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this practicum was to improve reading vocabulary and comprehension in fourth grade students using comic books thirty minutes per day as a supplement to the regular basal reading program. High interest comic books were used by a class section of eighteen students in the experimental group for a period of four months. Another class section of twenty students was selected as a control group. Success of the project was measured by pretest and posttest data. Instructional units and lesson plans using comic books were developed to teach specifically identified reading skills.

INTRODUCTION

In order to explore an alternative to improve the rate of students' achievement in reading vocabulary and comprehension, the principal initiated a program using comic books. The school population is predominantly black with most students reading below grade level.

Comic books were used thirty minutes each day to give easy, high interest materials to students who needed supplemental instruction in reading. This process was to increase the rate of achievement in vocabulary and comprehension to one month's achievement for each month's instruction. Teaching units and lesson plans were developed to meet the specific needs of the student and supplement his basal instruction.

An experimental class section was matched with a similar control class. Comparisons were made between the two groups with regard to achievement in vocabulary and comprehension. The results were not significant at the .05 level, but showed signs that the treatment was having a positive effect.

Based on input from the teacher of the experimental group and the reading resource teacher, comic books had a definite place in

teaching reading skills to students who were especially in need of developing reading skills. The comic books provided picture clues to decoding, helping the students to understand the stories. Many students began to experience success in reading where failure had been predominant.

THE PROBLEM

In the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), lack of student achievement in reading and mathematics has become a major issue. The General Superintendent and School Board have placed emphasis on the improvement of student achievement in these two vital areas. And insofar as individual school principals have the responsibility of being the instructional leaders of their respective schools, so has each principal found concern and emphasis upon improving student achievement in these two areas.

Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School is located in the inner city of Dallas, Texas. It has the following ethnic breakdown: 0.2 percent Anglo, 5.9 percent Mexican-American, and 93.9 percent Negro, with an enrollment of 1039 students. Most of the student come from single-family dwellings with assessed valuation of $5,000 to $9,999, or apartments which rent for $100 to $150 per month. Patron's average income is $6,733 per year. Slightly more than half of the families subscribe to a daily newspaper; even fewer subscribe to a national magazine.

The DISD tests its entire student population biannually through a systemwide testing program and publishes the testing data in an annual series of reports called the Performance Profiles. The District's commitment to accountability, including reading performance, is indicated in the following quote:

> The Performance Profiles are one indicator of the District's commitment to a policy of accountability to parents and the public through a systematic reporting of the educational processes and products of the DISD.[2]

DISD Research Report No. 76-823 contained testing data reading performance of Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School's students for 1975-76. The data were for grades two, four, and six. Chart 1 presents the data for Johnston fourth-grade students. It is included here since Johnston fourth-grade students were participating subjects in this practicum.

A concomitant volume, called Measurement Profiles, (Report No. 76-810) summarized the charts shown in the Performance Profiles and gave an excellent explanation of how to interpret Chart 1:

> The ten groups in the decile distribution are constructed so that 10% of the students from the large-city norm group

CHART 1

DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Reading ACCORDING TO THE Iowa Tests of Basic Skills GRADE 4 DATE

F. Roosevelt Attendance Area

	SCHOOLS																		
%R	Bowie	Harllee	Johnston	Miller	Mills													NORM GROUP	
90-99	0	0	0	0	0													10	
80-89	0	0	1	0	1													10	
70-79	9	3	3	3	3													10	MEDIAN
60-69	0	5	4	4	4													10	
50-59	6	3	4	6	6													10	
40-49	9	4	6	4	10													10	
30-39	11	9	16	17	19													10	
20-29	17	17	9	8	17													10	LARGE CITY
10-19	16	22	25	22	23													10	
1-9	31	31	31	30	25													10	
N	47	76	158	158	115														
Q_3	38.00	28.13	35.16	34.87	38.88													75	
M	20.13	15.38	17.19	16.07	20.75													50	
Q_1	6.94	6.29	7.56	6.55	9.41													25	
RELATED FACTORS																			
DI	58.47	88.66	74.19	26.12	33.56														
% MINORITY	72.66	99.83	99.62	100.00	99.89														
% MOBILITY	12.21	39.87	54.63	55.36	26.45														
% ATTENDANCE	83.79	87.90	88.97	90.78	88.76														
%ILE INCOME	24	5	21	33	17														
%ILE ED. LEVEL	45	12	48	58	31														

> will fall into each category. The column on the far left gives the percentile range (%R) for each group. Thus, reading across the table, the first column gives the large-city norm group decile distribution and each succeeding column shows the percent of District students, by school, that are in that range.
>
> The quartile distribution is constructed so that the District distribution is divided into quarters by quartiles. That is, at "Q_3" and 25% scored above it. "M" is the median, or 50th percentile, where half of the District students were above and half were below. "Q" is the first quartile, where 75% of the local students scored above it and 25% below it. Entries in the chart yield the percent of the large-city norm group who scored below the particular District school's quartile.
>
> "N" is the number of District students in each school who were tested.[3]

Each bar in Chart 1 shows the range between the first (Q) and the third (Q_3) quartiles, and the triangle indicates the median score. These data revealed that the median percentile rank reading level for the Johnston fourth-grade students was 17.19, a figure based on the large-city school norm. Fifty percent of the students were above 17.19 and 50 percent were below.

For the past five years, Johnston teachers have taught reading using a very fine Houghton Mifflin basal program combined with a supplemental program of reading from Southwest Regional

Laboratory (SWRL) under Title I of ESEA. Student progress still has not been at the rate specified by ESEA funding regulations and desired by the DISD General Superintendent and School Board; that is, students have not registered one month's achievement per one month of instruction.

Need to Improve Reading

As principal of Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School the author recognized the need for a constantly improving reading program. In conferences with fourth-grade teachers, it was decided that a reading program using comic books might contribute to improving reading achievement. This decision was strengthened by a conclusion Robert T. Thorndike had expressed in an educational journal:

> The apparent interest and appeal of this material comics for the child...suggests that this supplementary resource may have real value for the educator who is interested in working with the child as he is and leading him on from his present status to higher and better things.[4]

It was hoped that the decision for a new type of reading program involving the use of comic books would enhance the reading performance of Johnston students.

Basic Problems

The basic problems considered in the practicum were as follows:

A. To determine if an alternative supplemental reading program using comic books would improve the rate of student achievement in reading vocabulary and comprehension.

B. To determine if the improvement of an experimental group was significant compared to that of a control group as stated by the following hypotheses:

   1. There will be a significant difference in the mean comprehension achievement scores between the experimental and control groups as measured by the pre- and posttest grade equivalent scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test at .05 level.

   2. There will be a significant difference in the mean vocabulary achievement scores between the experimental and control groups as measured by the pre- and posttest grade equivalent scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test at .05 level.

C. To evaluate the program for possible expansion to other grade levels and schools.

A SOLUTION

General Plan

One randomly selected section of fourth-grade students was to be chosen as the experimental group and another similar fourth-grade section was to be chosen as the control group. The experimental group was to receive supplemental instruction using comic books, thirty minutes per day in addition to its regular basal and SWRL reading instruction. The control group was to maintain its regular basal and SWRL program in reading instruction.

The practicum was to be programmed according to lesson plans developed by the principal, reading resource teacher, and experimental teacher. The lesson plans were to be designed to improve specific reading skills through the use of comic books. (See Appendix A) The comic books to be used would cover a vast number of interest of the students. There were to be books on adventure, history, entertainment, and so on.

The purpose of the use of comic books was to raise the reading comprehension and vocabulary achievement of at least 50 percent of the students in the experimental group by one month for each month of

instruction as determined by the grade equivalent score on the pre- and posttests of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. A comparison of the experimental and control groups was to be made to determine if providing comics thirty minutes per day as a supplement to the regular reading program was more effective than providing the regular reading instruction alone.

Since all the work was to be done in the author's school, permission of the DISD Development Council was not needed.

Selection of Participants - Students

On January 5, 1976, the experimental and control groups were selected. Each group consisted of fourth-grade students of the regularly assigned class sections. Students were randomly assigned to the sections at the beginning of the 1975-76 school year. The experimental group was selected by a simple flip of a coin. Eighteen students were in the experimental group selected; twenty were in the control group.

Selection of Participants - Teachers

Two teachers volunteered to participate in the practicum. Both teachers had a Masters degree, and had taught in the inner-city

for five years. The experimental teacher had a total of eleven years' experience compared to six years for the teacher of the control group. Both teachers were married. They had no specialized training in reading, but had taught reading in the regular language arts classes at Johnston. By the simple process of flipping a coin, one was chosen to teach the experimental group and the other to teach the control group.

Role of Reading Resource Teacher

The reading resource teacher at Johnston aided in planning and implementing the practicum. Her assistance was equally divided among all Johnston teachers, therefore, the experimental and control teachers received the same amount of help.

Selection of Testing

During the first week of January, both the experimental and the control groups were given the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test as a pretest of vocabulary and comprehension skills. During the third week in May the posttest was given, using the same test. Differences in achievement levels in vocabulary and comprehension were noted. They will be discussed later in the report.

Selection of Comics

There was no money available through the DISD budget to buy any comic books. The author was able to use funds from the local school activity account to make the initial purchase of a set of books. The vendor offered the second set as a gift to the school. After the practicum progressed to the point that students became interested, they began to pruchase their own comic books to bring to class.

Guided by the results of the pretest and through consultation with the reading resource teacher, the teacher of the experimental group chose the titles of the initial comic books to be purchased. Titles of the books chosen were as follows:

A. The Life of Benjamin Banneker (Black History)

B. The Saga of Harriet Tubman (Black History)

C. Crispus Attucks (Black History)

D. Scooby Doo Where Are You (Cartoon Adventure)

E. Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch (Cartoon Adventure)

The comic books on black history added another dimension to the practicum which had not been anticipated by the author. They created an interest by the students in their black heritage. Students began checking the school library for books about other blacks in history.

Selection of Teaching Method

In addition to regular basal reading for the experimental group, thirty minutes of supplemental reading instruction using comic books were to be conducted during each morning. During that time the control group was receiving its regular basal instruction. Half of the thirty minutes supplemental instruction came from the basal program's allotted time and the other half from the social studies' time. Samples of lesson plans developed for the experimental group may be found in Appendix A.

IMPLEMENTING THE PRACTICUM

Planning

At the beginning of the practicum the reading resource teacher and the experimental group teacher developed a series of lesson plans to meet the individual needs of the students in vocabulary and comprehension through the use of comic books. They used as a guide the mastery objectives developed in the DISD Baseline Curriculum. Examples of mastery reading objectives may be found in Appendix C.

During the first week the teacher allowed students to look at the comic books as a reward for finishing regularly assigned work.

This was done to develop an interest in reading comics. The students had no specific requirement in the use of the books, only to become familiar with them. On Friday of the first week, all students were given the opportunity to look at one or more comic books. Most of the students just looked at the pictures and made no effort to read the dialogue. No restriction was ever placed on the students' choice of comic books throughout the duration of the practicum.

Beginning with the second week, students were required to accomplish specific assignments to learn specific skills (See Appendix A). For example, students read to each other to improve oral language and decoding skills; they made word lists to learn vocabulary and word sounds; and, through the guidance of the teacher, learned other comprehension skills as outlined in Part III of Appendix B.

For six weeks the students used comic books furnished by the author. As student interest in reading increased, students purchased and brought their own comics to class. The lesson plans developed allowed for the teacher to use either books obtained by the school or those purchased by the student.

Conferences between Principal and Teachers

Prior to implementation of the practicum, the second and fourth Mondays of each month, all fourth-grade teachers met with the principal for forty minutes during their conference period. At this time teachers were urged to discuss any specific problems which were keeping them from being as effective as possible in teaching. Behavior problems were not discussed. The main purpose was to develop the local school instructional program to meet the needs of the students and fulfill the objectives of the DISD baseline.

The main topics discussed in these meetings were (a) how best to individualize through grouping of students, (b) strategies to implement the DISD baseline curriculum, including development of teaching units and lesson plans, (3) how to deal with students who have difficulty in learning. Each fourth-grade teacher, including the experimental and control teachers, approached the lesson planning in different ways, but all set specific teaching goals and submitted them to the principal for review. Each teacher and the principal had to agree that the goals were realistic, attainable, and measureable. Some goals had to be revised to meet the above criteria.

These teachers-principals conferences continued on the same regular basis after the practicum was implemented. In January the teacher of the experimental group in conference with the principal revised her goals to include the use of comic books as a supplement to the reading program. She agreed to make her goal the same as the one for this practicum, that fifty percent or more of her class should gain one month of achievement in reading comprehension and vocabulary for each month of instruction.

The fourth Monday in April and the second Monday in May were routinely set aside for the review of all teachers' goals and determination of attainment. Each teacher met privately with the principal to discuss the success or failure in meeting the agreed upon goals. The teacher of the experimental group followed this procedure.

Role of the Principal

The principal was involved in the following areas of the practicum:

A. In early September proposed the idea of using comic books to imporve reading achievement in students who were below grade level.

B. Supervised the testing of the students and arranged for the

collection, evaluation and dissemination of data

C. Provided the necessary materials to be used (comic books testing materials).

D. Counselled with the teachers in setting the educational goals for the school year.

E. Met with the experimental teacher each week to prepare lesson plans and review progress of the practicum.

F. Visited in the experimental and control classes once per week to assure that lesson plans were being followed and that experimental group was receiving the prescribed instruction using comic books.

G. At the end of the practicum, met with participating personnel to discuss further extension of the use of comic books in the school.

LIMITATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Random Selection

The teachers of the experimental and control groups were selected by a flip of a coin. The class sections were chosen in like manner. Since the sections had been established in August, all

students in both the experimental and control groups had already been selected. To insure that the groups be statistically similar, analysis of covariance was used in the evaluation as outlined in McNeil, Kelly and McNeil.[5]

Contamination and Hawthorne Effect

The possibility of contamination was discussed by the author and participating teachers. The students in the inner-city school have become accustomed to being participants in special programs and are used to being tested. Observation indicated that their participation in another program, namely this practicum, made no difference to them. Similary, these same factors would apply to the Howthorne Effect.

The Use of Two Teachers

Having only two teachers participate in the practicum was considered as a possibly limiting factor. This effect was controlled for by (a) randomly selecting the experimental and control groups; (b) equal visitation of the two teachers by the author and reading resource teacher; (c) including both teachers in open discussion during the weekly meetings with the author and resource teacher.

Limited Number of Students

The author feared that the small number of students participating in the practicum might be a limitation. The DISD Research and Evaluation Department was consulted about this possibility. Their response was that, with proper control and proper evaluation, the small number of students would be adequate. Every effort was made to assure proper control and evaluation.

EVALUATION

The objective of the practicum was for at least 50 percent of the experimental group to gain one month or more achievement in vocabulary and comprehension for each month of instruction The posttest grade equivalent was compared to the pretest grade equivalent taken from the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test to determine if this had been done. The practicum was five months' duration, so five months' gain would have shown one month's gain for one month of treatment.

Experimental Group - Vocabulary

Table 1 reveals that of the 18 experimental students, 17 progressed and only one regressed, with none of the students remaining the same.

Table 1

Pre- and Posttests on Reading Vocabulary and Comprehension Measured by Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Experimental Group

Pupil	Vocabulary			Comprehension		
	Pre	Post	D	Pre	Post	D
D.B.	3.2	4.0	.8	4.2	4.9	.7
C.B.	2.5	3.2	.7	2.5	3.4	.9
G.C.	1.6	2.0	.4	1.7	1.9	.2
S.C.	3.8	5.1	1.3	3.8	4.6	.8
L.H.	2.5	3.3	.8	1.8	2.2	.4
M.J.	3.0	3.5	.5	2.9	3.6	.7
J.J.	3.1	3.6	.4	3.1	3.1	0
J.L.	3.8	4.4	.6	4.3	5.2	.9
V.M.	6.1	6.5	.4	5.4	5.6	.2
U.R.	2.7	1.5	-1.2	1.5	1.6	.1
L.R.	3.7	4.0	.3	3.4	3.9	.5
V.S.	5.5	5.7	.2	5.0	5.2	.2
C.T.	3.7	4.2	.5	3.6	4.5	.9
S.W.	3.5	3.9	.4	3.3	3.7	.4
L.W.	3.9	4.7	.8	2.6	2.9	.3
R.W.	2.5	3.3	.8	2.1	2.8	.7
S.W.	3.0	3.5	.5	2.8	2.5	-.3
D.W.	2.7	3.5	.8	3.0	3.6	.6

Eleven (61%) met the criterion established in the practicum of gaining five months or more. The mean gain for the group was five months, while the highest gain was one year and three months.

The range of the differences between the pretest and posttest was from minus one year and two months to a high of one year and three months, having a spread of 2.5 years. The pretest ranged from 1.6 to 6.1, a spread of 4.5. The posttest scores showed a range from a low of 1.5 to a high of 6.5, a spread of 5.0 year.

Sixty-one percent of the students gained five or more months' achievement compared to the extablished criterion of more than 50 percent. This part of the practicum was therefore, considered to be a success.

Experimental Group - Comprehension

Table 1 further reveals that among the same students (N=18) 16 students progressed, one regressed, and one remained the same with regards to scores on the Gates-MacGinitie subtest on comprehension. Nine (50%) students gained five months or more during the course of the practicum. The mean gain in comprehension was 4.6 months, while the largest gain was nine months made by three students.

Table 2

Pre- and Posttests on Reading Vocabulary
and Comprehension Measured by
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test
Control Group

Pupil	Vocabulary			Comprehension		
	Pre	Post	D	Pre	Post	D
J.A.	2.6	3.0	.4	2.7	2.7	0
T.A.	4.8	5.5	.7	5.4	5.6	.2
S.B.	4.6	4.7	.1	4.9	5.4	.5
S.B.	2.7	3.0	.3	2.8	3.0	.2
D.C.	2.9	3.4	.5	3.1	2.9	-.2
L.D.	4.0	4.4	.4	3.0	3.9	.9
E.F.	4.2	4.2	0	3.1	3.5	.4
G.G.	2.4	2.8	.4	2.6	3.2	.6
R.G.	3.1	3.7	.6	3.5	3.9	.4
R.H.	3.2	3.0	-.2	3.0	2.2	-.8
T.H.	3.2	3.1	-.1	3.7	2.7	-1.0
A.J.	2.6	2.8	.2	3.1	3.6	.5
M.L.	4.1	4.4	.3	3.7	3.4	-.3
E.M.	5.3	5.9	.6	5.7	6.5	.8
R.P.	5.2	5.3	.1	5.5	5.8	.3
R.R.	3.0	3.3	.3	3.0	3.4	.4
E.R.	2.6	3.2	.6	2.1	2.2	.1
F.S.	.6	1.3	.7	1.4	1.5	.1
H.T.	2.1	2.5	.4	2.1	2.7	.6
B.W.	3.5	3.4	-.1	4.1	4.3	.2

The differences between the pre- and posttest scores ranged from a low of minus three months to a high of nine months, a spread of one year and two months. The pretest scores ranged from a low of 1.5 to a high of 5.4, a spread of 3.9 years. The range of the posttest scores was from a low of 1.6 to a high of 5.6, a spread of 4.0 years.

Fifty percent of the students met the criterion of five or more months' achievement. This part of the practicum was successful. The author was very pleased with the results.

Control Group - Vocabulary and Comprehension

Table 2 reveals that the control group did not meet the criterion for vocabulary or comprehension. Of the 20 control students, only six (30%) gained five months' or more achievement in both vocabulary and comprehension.

Summary Statistics - Grade Equivalent Scores

The second part of the evaluation hypothesized that the experimental group gains would be significantly greater than the control group gains at the .05 level. The gains were measured by the pre- and posttests grade equivalents on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The grade equivalent scores are found in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3

Summary Statistics
Gates-MacGinitie Grade Equivalent Scores
Comprehension

	Experimental (N=18)	Control (N=20)
Dependent Variable Mean	36.222	36.200
Covariate Mean	31.667	34.250
Standard Deviation Dependent Variable	11.929	13.181
Adjusted Mean Difference	3.12	0.39

Since the Adjusted Mean Difference of Experimental Group was larger (3.12) than that of the Control Group (0.39), any difference in the groups shown by F statistically favors the experimental group.

Table 4

Summary Statistics
Gates-MacGinitie Grade Equivalent Scores
Vocabulary

	Experimental (N=18)	Control (N=20)
Dependent Variable Mean	38.833	36.450
Covariate Mean	33.778	33.350
Standard Deviation Dependent Variable	11.779	11.251
Adjusted Mean Difference	6.08	4.11

Since the Adjusted Mean Difference of Experimental Group was larger (6.08) than that of the control group (4.11), any difference in the groups shown by F statistically favors the experimental group.

Summary Results - Analysis of Covariance

The author originally planned to use the t ratio to determine the significance of the differences between the experimental and control groups. However, it was decided to use the analysis of covariance to assure the equality of the groups statistically.

The steps outlined in McNeil, Keely, and McNeil[6] were followed to find the F statistic. The F statistical tables were consulted to find the level of significance.

Computer cards were punched to reflect the data shown in Tables 1 and 2. When this was completed, the cards were taken the the DISD Department of Research, Evlauation and Information Systems. A Senior evaluator determined the type of data needed for the analysis of covariance and programed the computer to obtain the information. The printout gave the analysis of covariance summary results for the group, test and subtest, as well as the summary results found in Tables 3 and 4. The analysis of covariance results are shown in Tables 5 through 7.

Table 5

Analysis of Covariance Summary Results
Gates MacGinitie Grade Equivalent on Comprehension

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Degree of Freedom	F
Within Groups	633.774	18.108	35	
Between Groups	69.303	69.303	1	3.83

The hypothesis tested was that the achievement of the experimental group would be significant at the .05 level in the mean reading comprehension achievement of the two groups as measured by pre- and posttest grade equivalent scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Absolute value of F (3.83) is less than the critical value of F(4.12); therefore, the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in groups was rejected. Although not significant, the difference favored the experimental group. (Table 3)

Table 6

Analysis of Covariance Summary Results
Gates-MacGinitie Grade Equivalent on Vocabulary

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Degree of Freedom	F
Within Groups	556.642	15.904	35	
Between Groups	36.696	36.696	1	2.31

The hypothesis tested was that the achievement of the experimental group would be significant at the .05 level in the mean reading vocabulary achievement of the two groups as measured by pre- and posttest grade equivalent scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Absolute value of F (2.31) is less than the critical value of F (4.12); therefore, the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in group was rejected. Although not significant, the difference favored the experimental group. (See Table 4)

Table 7

Summary of Absolute F

Comprehension	Vocabulary
3.83 (favors experimental)	2.31 (favors experimental)

Note: Enter the F Tables at point .05, Freedom of 1, N of 35, Critical F is 4.12.

Summary Results - Absolute F

Table 7 reveals the absolute F to be 3.83 between groups in comprehension. The cirtical F for freedom of 1 and N of 35 is 4.12 at the .05 level of significance making the difference between the groups not significant. The adjusted means difference for the experimental group was 0.39, causing the absolute F value to statistically favor the experimental group, meaning the treatment was beginning to have an effect on improving comprehension.

In vocabulary , The absolute F was 2.31 with the same critical F being 4.12. The adjusted mean difference for the experimental group

was 6.08 compared to the control group's 4.11 (Table 4) causing the absolute F to statistically favor the experimental group. The treatment was beginning to have a positive effect on improving vocabulary.

Since the use of comic books was beginning to show positive results, even though not significant at the .05 level, in improving vocabulary and comprehension, the author was very pleased. Definite recommendations are found later in this report regarding possible future extension of the practicum.

Experimental Teacher's Statement

Although the results of the practicum were not statistically significant, the teacher of the experimental group made the following statement:

> This pilot program has provided the children who participated with a definite incentive to read. Many of these children, especially the boys, are getting their parents to purchase comic books for their reading pleasure. Most of these homes do not contain any type of reading material. Many problem children now spend free time reading comic books, that earlier would have caused only behavior or discipline problems.
>
> The comic book is not associated with the failure these children have had previously with reading. They derive

> both pleasure and entertainment whild gaining the necessary reading skills. They provide numerous picture clues to help in decoding. Role playing is easily developed from these stories and the children quickly initiate these situations on their own.
>
> It is my feeling that these children have greatly benefited from their experience with comic books. It may not be possible to measure the results on a test, but the fact that some of these children are reading during their free time is success after having had nothing but failure in reading in the past.[7]

Reading Resource Teacher's Statement

The reading resource teacher made the following statement regarding her evaluation of the use of comic books as a supplemental reading program:

> The rational for the use of comic books in the classroom is that children are readily motivated to read comic books and that they might be available to children in their homes. It therefore, seems probable that children instructed in the use of comic books in school would continue reading them at home and that the practice effect would increase reading skill and help to establish attitudes favorable to reading for pleasure throughout life.
>
> My observation of this program in our school confirms this thesis. I observed children bringing comic books to school to discuss and trade with classmates. I had not observed this previously in the five years I taught here.
>
> In organizing this program we bought sets of comics so that groups could be instructed. Spontaneous discussions resulted and were helpful in encouraging the children to share the the comic books they read at home.

> Comic books for this purpose need to be selected carefully. We bought comic books which at face value were easy to read, had a minimum of sex and violence, and had characters which our children were familiar with.
>
> Attitudes of children and parents presented the only difficulty in implementing the program. Children were reluctant, at first, to attend the skills lessons needed for reading comic books because they did not percieve the value of the lessons as school work. This attitude reflected negative judgements of some parents.
>
> I consider this a very worthwhile reading program.[8]

Evaluation Conclusions

The following were conclusions from the evaluation:

1. The goal that more than 50 percent of the experimental students would gain five or more months' achievement in vocabulary and comprehension for five months of instruction was successful.
2. The achievement of the experimental group compared to the control group was not significant at the .05 level.
3. The teacher of the experimental group expressed the opinion that many students had developed an interest in reading, an interest that had not been observed prior to the practicum. She further expressed the opinion that many students also had improved discipline, according to her own observations.

4. The reading resource teacher observed that students' attitude toward reading improved as their interest in comic books increased. She also noticed that the parents' negative attitude was a problem at the beginning of the practicum.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The overall program was considered to be unsuccessful.
2. The following recommendations emerged from this practicum:
    a. The project should be conducted as a year-long program with an increased number of students, since there were indications that a longer period of time and larger groups might lead to the success of a comic-book reading program.
    b. Parents' attitude should be taken into consideration; a positive parent attitude would facilitate the program.
    c. The use of comic books can be a viable supplementary program of reading.

FURTHER APPLICATION AND FOLLOW-UP

During the 1976-77 school year, comic books will be used in Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School not only in the fourth grade but expanded to the fifth grade also. They will continue to be used

as a supplement to the basal reading program. The reading resource teacher will establish the use of comic books in the remedial reading program of the school.

Comic books on black history will be used in the fifth grade social studies classes. The author will continue to search for other comics which will be helpful in other comics which will be helpful in other academic areas of the curriculum.

A copy of this report will be made available to the Director of Reading for DISD, Dr. Alvin Granowsky. With reading improvement as a primary goal of the DISD, the author believes that the use of comic books offers teachers an innovative and successful approach to teaching many students. The information provided by the teacher of the experimental group and the reading resource teacher suggests that many students developed a productive interest in reading for pleasure and information.

The author will also suggest to Dr. Granowsky that several DISD inner-city schools be used as pilots for a year to determine the feasibility of utilizing comic books for teaching reading to low academic students. With the units of instruction already developed

in this practicum, plans could be easily made for the year's project. Since all the statistics lean toward the experimental group, the author feels that the use of comic books in reading programs could convert some students' reading failure to success.

Appendix A

Comic Book Reading Program - Lesson Plans
Week of August 23-27

Goal- Reading as a thinking process

Focus- Comic books as textbooks (Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch)

Plan- Broken into four parts, but it may take as many as six to complete. This depends upon the readiness of each individual class.

Rationale for choosing Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch as the initial Text:

The characters are part of a cartoon with which the students are already familiar and are more readily acceptable to students who have had little or no success with reading. Students are more eager to read comics because this is a medium where they have not previously met failure, as in a hardback text.

1. Look over books for 5 to 10 minutes. Discuss using comics as tests; convey idea of reading as a respect for words no matter how presented. Discuss title, note word endings, ie, er, long e sound and op sound. List on board other words with the op sound, using students' own language experience. Have students look through pp. 1-4 to find new or unknown words; spell them aloud and put them on the board so we can pronounce them. Read pp. 1-4 silently, then orally. Let the students take the parts of the characters. Discuss character roles as good or bad, real or imaginary. Discuss why.

2. Pp. 5-8- Look for new words to spell and pronounce. Read pp. 5-8 silently. Then break into groups of 5 to dramatize the story, having each student read a specific part. Allow time for each group to read the story at least twice. Discuss with the whole class the feelings expressed by the characters. How do you know their feelings and why do they feel that way? Have you ever had the same feelings and why? Phonics- words with the long e sound may be spelled.

3. Reread whole story, pp. 1-8, orally. Involve all students; can be done as group reading with several children reading the same part simultaneously. Discuss words that have a similar meaning, ie.,

Appendix A con't

"hold it" as "wait a minute" or "stop." Which things could you say differently? Sounds as words- list on the board. Discuss why sounds are said by characters. Show how comics distinguish between speech and thought.

4. Draw a picture of your favorite character. Display pictures after they are complete. Phonics and word recognition. Go back through the story, The Texas Wrecker, pp. 1-8 to make a list of words containing the long ē sound.

wheelers	we	beep	three	bein'	sweetie
wheelie	beat	steal	see	besides	
he	leave	she	me	windshield	

Each child should list at least 10 words.

Appendix B

Unit on Comic Books
Mastery Objective

I. To use comic books to teach reading in the fourth grade

Rationale- Children are motivated to read comic books

II. To establish the habit of reading for pleasure, leisure, pasttime

Rationale- If children structure their time to include time for reading as a pasttime they will continue to do that all their lives. Much adult reading includes newspaper and magazine stories which provide entertainment and adventure rather than information or education.

III. To teach comprehension skills

a. vocabulary and word meaning (the lexicon in comic books includes words in common usage therefore providing important words for study)
b. figurative language
c. recall- sequence
d. main idea
e. facts or fantasy
f. predicting outcomes
g. drawing conclusions
h. describing qualities, emotions, motives
i. author's point of view
j. narrative and dramatic technique, plot summary

IV. To teach decoding skills

a. applying phonetic generalizations to decode new words
b. using the context in decoding.

Appendix C

MASTERY OBJECTIVES
GRADE 4

A. Locating information- Demonstrate literal skills of comprehension by locating specified details. Demostrate interpretative skills of comprehension by the prediction of outcome

B. Recall sequence of events- Demonstrate literal skills in comprehension through recalling a sequence of events.

C. Main idea- Exhibit literal skills in comprehension through identification of the main idea.

D. Figurative language- Demonstrate vocabulary and word meaning skills in comprehension through the use of figurative language.

E. Facts/fantasy- Demonstrate literal skills in comprehension by distinguishing between factual and nonfactual elements.

F. Similarities/differences- Demonstrate literal skills in comprehension by describing similarities and differences in similar subject matter.

G. Drawing conclusions- Demonstrate interpretative skills in comprehension through drawing conclusions from pictorial representations.

H. Drawing inferences- Demonstrate interpretative skills of comprehension through drawing specifed inferences.

I. Qualities, emotions, motives- Demonstrate interpretative skills in comprehension through the determination of qualities, motives, or emotions.

J. Making judgments- Demonstrate interpretative skills in comprehension through evaluating or making a judgment.

Footnotes

1. Principal of Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School, Dallas, Texas.

2. Department of Research, Evaluation and Information Systems Dallas, Independent School District, Performance Profiles, 1975-76, Franklin D. Roosevelt Attendance Area, Grades 2, 4, 6, Research Report No. 76-823.

3. Measurement Profiles, Fall Testing, 1975, Department of Research, Evaluation and Information Systems, Dallas Independent School District.

4. Thorndike, Robert L. "Words and Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, Vol. 10, December, 1941, pp. 110-113.

5. McNeil, Keith, Kelley, Francis, and McNeil, Judy, Testing Research Hypotheses Using Multiple Linear Regression, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1975, pp. 25-54.

6. Ibid.

7. Cara A. Berman, Teacher Fourth Grade, Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School, Dallas, Texas.

8. Jane Hoffman, Reading Resource Teacher, Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School, Dallas, Texas.